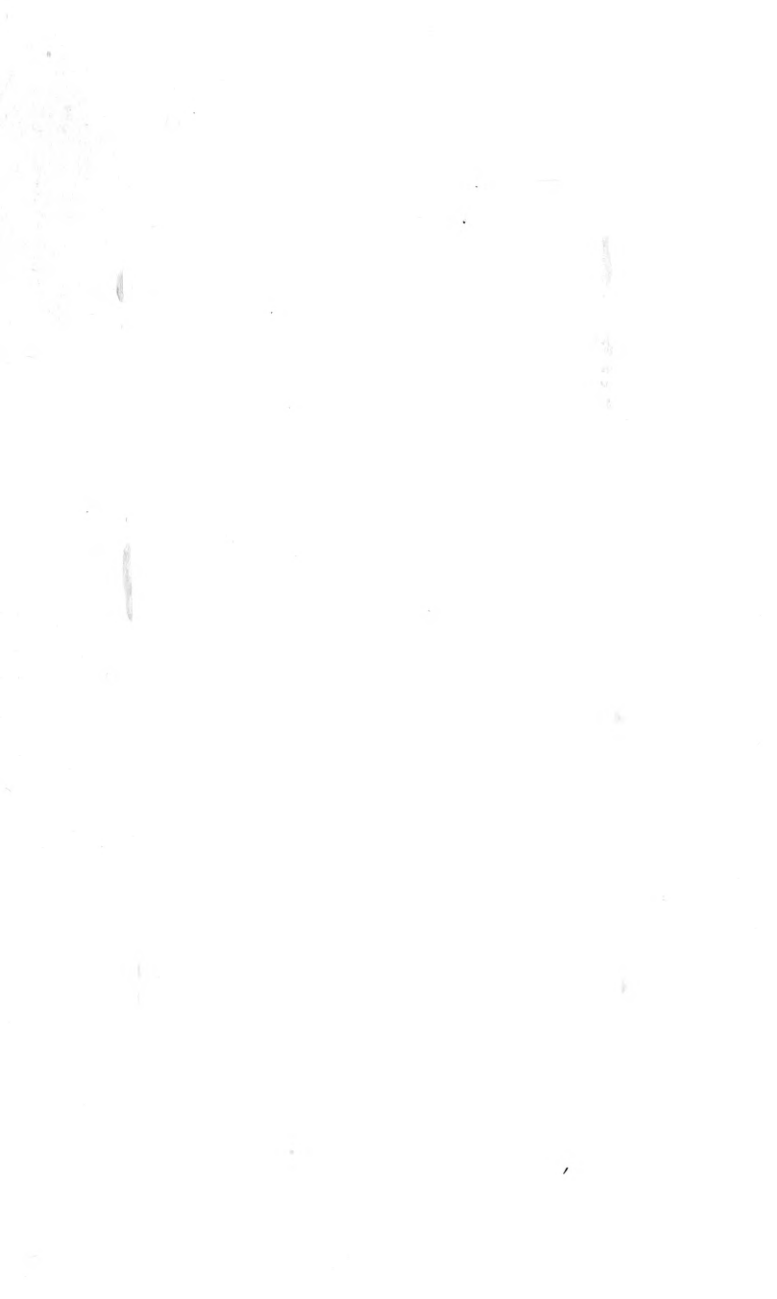


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BLURS AND BLOTTINGS.

BLURS AND BLOTTINGS :

A MISCELLANY OF VERSE.

BY

DAVEN.

BIRMINGHAM :

CORNISH BROTHERS, 37, NEW STREET.

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“ The little of myself that pleases myself, I could wish to be accounted worth pleasing others.”

Leigh Hunt.

“ What good thereof to Cuddie can arise ? ”

Spenser.

“ It cannot be denied, that whoever publishes a book to the world, exposes himself to imminent peril, since, of all things, nothing is more impossible than to satisfy everybody.”

Cervantes.

So take these kindly, even though there be
Some notes that unto other lyres belong,
Stray echoes from the elder sons of Song ;
And think how from its neighbouring, native sea
The pensive shell doth borrow melody.
I would not do the lordly masters wrong,
By filching fair words from the shining throng
Whose music haunts me, as the wind a tree !
Lo ! when a stranger, in soft Syrian glooms
Shot through with sunset, treads the cedar dells,
And hears the breezy ring of elfin bells
Far down by where the white-haired cataract
booms,
He, faint with sweetness caught from forest
smells,
Bears thence, unwitting, plunder of perfumes.

Kendall.

BLURS AND BLOTTINGS.

LAERTES.

Slow wane the months in the slow-waning year,
As daily on this vine-yard slope I toil,
For stranger mouths tending the luscious vine,
While he—tarries and tarries, knowing not how they,
Feasting and wrangling in his ancient halls,
Sham suitors, spoil his substance ; and Telemachus
Lacks yet the strength of manhood and the will
To purge the household. So unchecked the herds
Daily diminish, while Eumæus here
And my weak, watery eyes together scan
At eve the wave for sign of mariner,
If yet unharmed my son, Ulysses, sail.
For what avails to cheer the downward path
To Age, like son in manhood's glorious prime
Oft visiting the household, linking on
Past generations with to-come, and so

Recalling ever the quick-flying years,
 When the full strength of manhood was a joy ?
 For travellers oft have told, when wandering here,
 By tempest driven to this rugged isle,
 How he, my son, chiefest of all the Greeks,
 Gave counsel wise, nor failed in battle's hour,
 And so was deemed Achilles' arms to win.
 So wise, so valiant, the son I mourn.
 Ah, me ! Where roams he now ? 'Neath what
 strange sky ?

Perchance he wanders o'er some barren isle,
 Searching the shore for shell-fish, or inland
 On roots and berries gains a livelihood.
 Perchance a slave to some proud, foreign lord,
 Grinding at mill, he thinks of Ithaca,
 And the far distant days of boyhood, ere
 He left there fair meads to beleaguer Troy,
 And gain renown for puissance among men.
 Oh ! would some god direct him to this isle !
 He soon, methinks, would scare this suitor troop
 Out of his ancient halls, where erst I ruled,
 In robes far different from these earth-stained rags,

Who now toil here, bereft of all delight ;
Yet oft as o'er this orchard slope I gaze,
And mark the varying hues of fruit and leaf,
I gain sad comfort even from my toil,
Noting its goodly issue. For, indeed,
Who works, creates, and in his work is blest,
Raising a progeny of useful deeds.
And music, too, to soothe my lonely thought
I find in the sea's murmur, and its voice
Mysterious, mournful, while the hum of bees,
Pillaging honey from the spring-tide bloom,
The rustling light of trees, the glorious sun
High in the azure skies, give comfort too.
Thus patiently his advent home I wait.

“A WYF IS GODDES GIFTE VERRAYLY.”

Pleasant it was in single days to hear
On sleepless bed the nightingale trill forth
From the neighbouring coppice, with a murmur blent
Of falling waters : but it ne'er was like
The music of thy magic-beating breast
In wakefulness now heard : the summer sun,
High in its vault of blue, shone gloriously,
But ne'er was like the sunshine of thy smile—
Thy radiant smile of constant joyousness ;
And Nature's myriad voices, heard in vale
Of flowers and plenty, or by summer shore,
Are all surpassèd by the lispings soft,
The fairy prattle of that fair-haired troop
Thou gavest me, to solace my dull care.

AN EVENING WISH.

Mine be the glory of the summer sun,
In twilight hour decking the glowing west
With radiant gold. See ! how the cloudless east
In fainter colours imitates its hue !
So may my children's children on my knee
Reflect their grandsire's features, face to face.
How soft and cool the air ! So may my age
After the scorching glare of fevered life
Invest with mellow mildness my gray hairs.
Look how with promise of a fairer dawn
All things are glad ! So may my later years
Foretell a day more golden, happier far
Than this drear world can give, 'mid angel choirs
In our long, endless home, where all is love.

THE TOWER ABOVE THE VALE.

I had walked two miles on a winter's day,
And my spirit within me, I wist,
Was grieved at the thought of the glorious hues
My loving eye sadly missed.

For around me there hung the dank, burdensome
folds

Of an ache-charged and rheumatic fog,
Which shrouded my view, and impeded the flight
Of my fain-soaring mind like a clog.

But when I had mounted the brow of the hill,
I gazed on a marvellous sight ;
And all my unquiet and querulous thoughts
In a trice had taken their flight.

For the vale at my feet was still shrouded in gloom ;
But the tower on the bordering hill
Had its turrets all bathed in a glorious light,
While its base was surrounded still

With the gray morning mist, fantastic with curls,
Which shed a mysterious air
O'er the tower, and the hill, and the stir of life,
And all man's pastoral care.

Then seemed I to dwell in the wondrous world
Of the poet's waking dream,
Or heard in the rustling, forest breeze,
Or seen 'neath the moon's soft beam.

Then seemed I to dwell in a land far removed
From the sins and the sorrows of this,
Where care never comes, but for ever reign
Truth, Beauty, Affection, Bliss.

A SIGH.

Oh ! for the woodlands,
Oh ! for their gleam,
Oh ! for the cool
Of the willow-girt stream.

Far from the clatter
Of cab and of van !
Far from the hubbub,
And meanness of man !

There from the city smoke,
There would I fly !
There on thy soft breast,
Love, would I lie !

INTO THE BRAMBLE.

Into the bramble,
 Into the briar,
'Neath the dank hawthorn,
 Deep in ditch mire
Just for a berry
 To brighten her hair,
Just for some scarlet
 To deck thee, my fair !
So thro' life's tangle,
 Din and turmoil,
Ne'er will I falter,
 Never recoil !
Just for the comfort
 A smile can assign ;
Just for thy pureness,
 And beauty divine !

SONG.

Oh ! round the wide world,
 O'er billow and foam,
Through countries remote
 It pleased me to roam.
Old cities I saw,
 Strange customs did view ;
When danger came nigh
 Stout-hearted I grew,
But though pleasing was change,
 At heart I was ill ;
For a sweet English face
 Was haunting me still.

With freshness of health
 My cheek was aglow ;
'Mong strangers and strangers
 I never met foe.
Matrons would welcome
 With words soft and mild ;

With eyes laughing love
 The maids ever smiled.
But though many were friends,
 At heart I was ill ;
For a sweet English face
 Was haunting me still.

Thus round the wide world,
 So restless in mind,
'Mid scenes new and strange,
 No peace could I find.

So back to my home
 Oh ! eager I sped,
That fair English maid
 Resolvèd to wed.

And now fair is my bride,
 At heart I'm not ill ;
For that sweet English face
 Is charming me still.

SYMPATHY.

Oh ! dark are the mountains,
Gloomy the rocks,
As in the rough weather
I follow my flocks ;
But still am I cheerful,
Light-hearted with glee,
For one in the valley
Is watching for me.

Oh ! dark is the coal-pit,
Gloomy the mine,
As on my side hewing
All day I recline ;
But still am I cheerful,
Light-hearted with glee,
For one in the sunlight
Is thinking of me.

Oh ! dark are the billows,
 Bitter the blast,
As through the night watches
 I stand by the mast ;
But still am I cheerful,
 Light-hearted with glee,
For one on the dry land
 Is dreaming of me.

WHEREFORE ?

Weary I rose, my garments donned ;
With anxious stride my labour sought
 In the morning air ;
But still there whispered in my ear :
 “ Why this labour ? Why this care ? ”

And when at evening's resting hour,
By cheerful fire, I sat reclined,
 And pondered there ;
The voice would still come mocking by :
 “ Why such labour ? Why such care ? ”

And thus a year-long was I vexed,
Nor could the questioner escape,
 This way or that.
At last in April's leafy time,
'Neath lilac tree, I saw where thou—
 My answer—sat.

A FAREWELL.

Never more shall I see thee, O peak in the west,
In summer eve decked in thy sunset attire,
When musings serene in the sorrowing heart
Rekindle Hope's dwindling fire.

Thee too shall I miss, ever whispering stream,
That leapest in foam from above !
Thy murmur so clear and so gleeful is like
The sweet prattle of laughing love.

Now in alien climes must I dream my dream,
And to alien winds must sigh ;
'Neath a foreign sky must my days be spent,
In a strange land I must die.

AMOR OMNIA VINCIT.

The biting jest, the stinging word,
The wish delayed, the hope deferred,
The constant cares that mark the brow—
So open once, so furrowed now ;
The envy which to honour clings,
The jealousy misfortune brings,
The daily round of constant work
Monotonous, we may not shirk—
In fine, all ills that men endure—
Oh ! what on earth like Love can cure ?

A RESOLUTION.

I watched her—'twas in early June—
 Beneath the rose-tree stand ;
I saw her light, elastic tread ;
 I marked her gentle hand.

How envied I the rosebud plucked
 To nestle on her breast !
How eagerly I longed by hand
 So gentle to be pressed !

Then in the social scene I marked
 Her ear to scandal closed ;
I saw how truth and kindness linked
 Falsehood and wrong opposed.

“ Could greater beauty, greater love,”
 Said I, “ become a throne ?
That maid so gentle, lovely, true,—
 I'll have her for mine own.”

‘ IBI OMNIS

EFFUSUS LABOR.’

A linnet once in hazel bush

Her cosy nest was weaving,
Such nest as might the bitter wind
Repel, the cold relieving.

But fate had willed no linnets young

Within those walls should nestle ;
Nor in fresh dalliance and play
With one another wrestle.

For as the nest, by circling round,

She joyously would hollow,
Among the twigs her feathers caught,
Nor could she further follow.

And thus 'mid cold and hunger pangs,
Through struggling void of feather,
Heartbroken there she passed away,
In piercing, wild, March weather.

So oft his work by purpose grand
Inspired a man has plied ;
But midst his striving, with designs
All unattained, has died.

LONGINGS.

Hast never marked the faithful hound,
His circling steps, his eager bound

By his loved master's side ?

Hast never in his glistening eyes,
(What most of all on earth we prize—)

Unquestioning love descried ?

What would he give for words to tell
Of all the kindly thoughts that dwell

Within his silent breast ?

But they to nothingness are doomed,
And in a speechless grave entombed

In dull oblivion rest.

Like dumbness, too, I ween, has man.
Old Nature's face we fondly scan

And on her beauty look.

But never have her glorious hues—
So halting is the speech men use—

Been writ aright in book.

REMINISCENCES.

The heather-clad glen with its echoing rills,
That gently slope down to the sea,
Though dreary and wild are its mountain sides
Is a spot ever dear to me.

And little I reck of the sunny climes,
Or shores so favoured of men,
For still to my sorrowing fancy there seems
A halo of light o'er that glen.

For there did my childhood glide pleasantly by,
There roamed I at will as a boy ;
E'er sorrow had come to mark me a man,
Or I knew of grief's annoy.

There, too, on the beach a maiden I met,
The work of the summer day done—
And there in the twilight all golden we watched
The death of the western sun.

A MOUNTAIN STREAM.

See! how the mountain brook, in bed
Of granite pressed,
Ever his wearying course pursues
In wild unrest.
From crag to crag he leaps along,
Breathless with foam,
As one in terror flees from some
Distracted home.

And yet full oft in mid career
Its course is stayed,
And for its furious, seething flood
Are havens made ;
As deep within some lustrous pool
It rests serene,
And o'er it purple heather breathes,
Or alders lean.

So, too, the heart that journeys on
 Life's troubled way,
May find repose and calm content
 For some brief day,
By gazing in the azure depths
 Of maiden eyes,
And losing all his tedious care
 In lover sighs.

NIMIUM NE CREDE COLORI.

The stars in the heaven when brightest they gleam
 Portend but a tempest-dark day ;
And when the bright rainbow is spanning the earth,
 Then keen is the air and miry the way.

So be cautioned—Those eyes which so wildly gleam,
 And that beauty so splendidly bright,
Portend but a wedlock harassed with storm,
 Whence truth and affection take flight.

* THE POET AS A MAN OF BUSINESS—POPULAR
VIEW.

A poet much is like a nightingale
In practical economy.
The nightingale in fashion strange, uncouth
Doth build her nest, untidily.
The poet, too, the business of his life
Transacts (men say) as carelessly.

* v. Sandy Mackaye in Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, ch. ix.

“Och, och ! they’re puir, feckless, crabbit,
unpractical bodies—they poets.”

THE WAYSIDE INN.

Sweet memory of the wayside inn !

Where cool Waikato glides,
And the bleak mountains rear aloft
Their tussock-covered sides.

For though my fare was scant and poor,
My bed scarce clean, and hard,
And pigs and fowls too prevalent—
Yet this I scarce regard.

For divers sights I saw—a brace
Of brewers, stout and true,
As e'er was beer, who broke the springs
Of their buggy, none too new ;

And Maori-legend-haunted rock,
Towering above the stream—
And pleasant evening sun, that made
Rock, hill-side, river gleam.

And one, a great K.C.M.G.,
 Was eke the landlord's care ;
And bank-clerks three, with knapsacks three,
 Pedestrians famed, were there.

But most, oh ! most I thee recall,
 Pride of some English home,
Thou did'st forsake, 'mongst marvels strange,
 And that fair land to roam.

The memory of thy face and form
 Oft cheered my lonely way ;
And now in city street relieves
 The burden of the day.

A SERMON FROM THE COVER-SIDE.

All breathless came the huntsman up:

“Now whither hath he sped?”

“By yonder hedgerow, 'cross the brook.”

Falsely the yokels said.

But at that instant came a cry

From some outlying hound,

And those fair-seeming words he deemed

But idle, empty sound.

So human speech was less esteemed

Than one poor foxhound's cry.

For dogs, you see, tell truth : but men,

Men have the power to lie.

THE SCHOOL OF SORROW.

Pain, anguish, toil are teachers. 'Tis a truth
Enshrined in many proverbs, many tongues.
Nor doth not sorrow, so men say, instruct
The poet's heart to fashion noble verse.
So in bereavèd pain the nightingale
Hath sweetest song : nor do the trees e'er make
Their rustling melody, unless wind-stirred ;
And melancholy Ocean's tragic tones
In the fierce hurricane sublimest are.
Oh ! grant me then such fortitude to win
That I may calmly bear these heaven-sent pains,
These pains of loneliness and poverty ;
So whisper here on earth some strains of heaven,
And fashion music midst my daily toil.

THROUGH GROVE AND GARDEN.

Through grove and garden raged the autumn gale,
And scourged the branches bare, and whirled the
leaf

Through the dull, damp air. Anon a crash I heard,
And turning saw the spindle's graceful tree
With bleeding branch, bare root. "No more," said I,
"Thy scarlet wealth shall mock December's gloom
And gladden winter. Nought but death is thine."
The slow years passed. One Christmas-tide I
marked,

Who cheerful plucked her frost-encrusted bough,
Her berried praise, to deck the House of God.
So lies, O Lord, my sin-defiled soul,
My stricken spirit in the dust of death.
Oh! may Thy Gardener Christ so raise me up,
And quicken me to deck Thy courts above.

“BUT JESHURUN WAXED FAT AND KICKED.”—

(DEUT. 32, 15.)

“ Mine every fleece thou see’st on yonder plain,
 Browsing the herbage. Mine too yonder kine,
 That ’neath the willows stand at noon ; and mine
 Full many a cornfield with her golden grain.
 Mine all the heart’s desire—a mansion fair,
 The world’s good will, a loving, gracious wife
 With children. Mine whatever brightens life.
 Why then should I fear God, why kneel in prayer?—”
 Such falsehood fair Prosperity doth teach
 Our carnal hearts amid her jovial feasts ;
 Yet stray we never from Thy Mercy’s reach ;
 But driven forth to herd among the beasts,
 And lodge with sorrow, hasten from the wild,
 In spirit chastened as the weanèd child.

“PUT NOT YOUR TRUST . . . IN ANY CHILD OF
MAN.”—(PS. 146, 2.)

False, false the flattering word, the fawning speech,
Self-seeking merely of fair-weather friend ;
False, false the mob's applause, the people's praise,
Mere passing tribute of the passing day.
False, too, the peace wealth promised youth to give
Empty and false ambition's hopes achieved ;
And, ah ! too often false a woman's wealth
Of winning smile and awful loveliness—
False, all are false. Thou Christ Alone Art True.

A MORNING IN WINTER.

One winter morn a moorland path I paced,
Before me lay the soft new-fallen snow
Stainless and pure : all earth methought was
 wrapped
In dazzling garment of true righteousness.
So passed I, and a peace possessed my soul.
At noontide I returned ; and lo ! the ground
Befoulèd was, and blackened with the feet
Of hurrying men, each on his business bound.—
So stainless once this world lay ; stainless once
Man walked in Eden, till by tempter's guile
Sin entered in : then straight earth's fairest things
Were cankered all, and gracious gifts of God
Corrupted and defiled, as woman's love,
And that glad warmth the sun-fed vintage gives.

“AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS.”—

(II. COR. V. I.)

“The mason good never rejecteth stone,”
 So in my boyish days one jesting spake,
 Trimming the rough, jagg’d granite, as he sought
 How best to lay it in the rising walls
 Of what should be a goodly chapel fair.—
 “The mason good never rejecteth stone.”
 That speech so lightly uttered, lightly heard,
 In these dark sorrow and sin-saddened days
 I oft recall : and straight these tearful eyes,
 Quitting that loved hill-side, in faith behold
 The mystic building of that Temple Fair,
 Whereof Christ Jesus is the Corner-Stone.
 Such vision hath my spirit. Jesu Lord !
 Oh ! from that Fabric cast not out my soul.

SCENE FROM THE PROMETHEUS
VINCTUS OF ÆSCHYLUS.

SCENE FROM THE PROMETHEUS VINCTUS OF
ÆSCHYLUS (V.V, 572-753).

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Prometheus, chained to a rock.

Io, turned into a heifer by the jealousy of Juno,
and driven over the earth by a gad-fly.

Chorus of the daughters of Ocean.

Io here enters, with much lamentation, and asks Prometheus to foretell some of her future suffering. He complies, but first, at the request of the Chorus, she tells her own story.

Io.

What land or race of men is here ?

Or who is this, by fate severe,

Doth winter in these cruel chains ?

What heinous crime hath met such pains ?

But chiefly do I beg that thou

Would'st tell what land I traverse now.

Ah ! me. The gad-fly round me flies,

Again I see those myriad eyes.
 O earth! restrain him. Much I dread
 To see that hated herdsman's head.
 He journeys ever by my side,
 * Whom, e'en when dead, Death cannot hide.
 His crafty eyes from shades below,
 Have come to hunt me in my woe.
 By sandy sea-beach wandering oft,
 Hungry I hear the music soft
 From his shrill flute, inviting sleep.
 More cause, alas! have I to weep.
 Ah! me, when will these wanderings end?
 For what offence, Zeus, dost thou send
 This terror of the gad-fly sting?
 Alas! soon, soon 'twill madness bring.
 O Zeus! with thy devouring flame
 Consume me, let earth hide my name.
 Or let sea-monster feed on me;
 Why should this boon be grudged of thee?
 Sorrows enough, I ween, have come

* "Io is represented as a crazed person, fearing the apparition of Argus, who glides in spectral pursuit of her, habited as a herdsman on the stage."—PALEY.

To me, in wanderings from home.
 Nor have I power my woes to aid.
 Thou hear'st the voice of horned maid.

PROMETHEUS.

Hear I the maid, in suffering dire,
 From gad-fly sting, by Hera's ire,
 Compelled to wander? Is't the voice
 Of her in whom Zeus did rejoice?

IO.

Oh! who art thou that thus dost know
 Me, and my piteous tale of woe?
 How stricken here, by Hera sent,
 I roam, by maddening gad-fly spent.
 My steps in frenzy do I bend,
 For she in jealous craft doth send
 Grim Hunger, with its painful shame,
 My spirit mutinous to tame.

Ah! me. Ah! me.

What wretched men e'er knew the woe,
 And suffering I thus undergo?

Oh ! shew me remedy to aid
This dire disease of wandering maid.

PROMETHEUS.

Then plainly will I answer thee, nor weave
Dark riddles with my speech, but friendly-wise.
See here Prometheus who gave fire to man.

IO.

O giver of such wondrous aid to men,
Prometheus, wherefore do you suffer here ?

PROMETHEUS.

I scarce have ceased lamenting of my woe.

IO.

Couldst thou not also tell thy tale to me ?

PROMETHEUS.

What tale ? All things thou dost desire to
learn.

IO.

Tell me who chained thee to these cruel crags ?

PROMETHEUS.

Zeus gave the word, Hephæstus gave his skill.

IO.

But say what crime hath won such penalty ?

PROMETHEUS.

Thus so much briefly need I tell to thee.

IO.

Then tell me further of the limit set
To these sad wanderings, and my troublous
days.

PROMETHEUS.

Here ignorance is better than to know.

IO.

Nay, hide not aught of future sufferings.

PROMETHEUS.

It is not that I grudge to give such gift.

IO.

Why, then, delay'st thou to reveal the rest ?

PROMETHEUS.

My pity fears to break your heart with grief.

Io.

What matter—if thou know'st it my desire ?

PROMETHEUS.

Since 'tis thy will I speak. Hear thou the
tale.

CHORUS.

Nay, nay, not yet ; give us our pleasure too.
For we would learn of this poor wanderer
Her sorry fortune and so dread disease.
Then shalt thou tell us of her future toils.

PROMETHEUS.

This favour, Io, must thou grant to them,
As kin to thee and to thy father's house.
Well may'st thou tell thy piteous tale to win
From listening friends the gracious meed of
tears.

Io.

Distrust among such friends were wrong, so
hear

The plain, unvarnished tale of these my woes.
 And yet, e'en now, I shudder to recall
 The heav'n-sent frenzy, and the quick-coming
 shock
 That changed my form,—my crowning ill of
 life.
 For ever as night came were visions strange,
 Thronging my maiden chamber, with smooth
 speech
 Thus counselling me. "O thou, so greatly
 blessed,
 Why lingerest thou a maid, since wedlock
 choice
 Is offered thee? Great Zeus hath seen thy
 charms,
 And sues thee. Wherefore, child, forbear con-
 tempt
 For such high fate, and visit the fair meads
 Of Lerna, where thy father's oxen range,
 So Zeus may have his will." Thus was I
 vexed
 By night with fearful dreams : till last I dared

To tell my father : he with speed did send
 To Delphi messengers, enquiring oft
 By deed or vow to appease the angry god.
 But they returning brought no message clear,
 But riddles merely, hints obscure and dark ;
 Till at the last a distinct order came
 Enjoining, I from home and native land
 Should be expelled to wander o'er the bounds
 Extreme of earth—the victim of great Zeus.
 If not—the blazing bolt in wrath would fall,
 Utter destruction to my father's home.
 Then he, by these grim prophecies impelled,
 In sorrow from the house unwillingly
 Drave me unwilling—so stern Zeus ordained.
 Then straight my form was changed ; then
 horned as now,
 And maddened by the ever-goading sting
 Of gad-fly, to the cooling stream I fled,
 And Lerna's shore ; but ever on my track,
 The herdsman, Argus, kept his myriad eyes,
 Fierce with unbridled hate, till, unforeseen,

Death seized him. Thus from land to land ye
see

Me driven by gad-fly scourge. Thou hast my
tale.

But oh ! if thou canst speak of hardships still
To suffer, tell me ; nor in pity false
Conceal them, since untruths are never kind.

CHORUS.

Ah ! me. I never thought, when leaving
My ocean bed,

That I, to hear this piteous tale,
Should thus have sped.

Ne'er deemed I such wild, frenzied woe,
And terror of the gad-fly's blow

Would chill my heart so keenly.

Alas ! Alas !

I shudder at the sight of Io's fate.

PROMETHEUS.

Thou cry'st full early, and art full of fear.

Hold, till thou hear'st of woes e'en yet to come.

CHORUS.

Pray tell us. Pleasant 'tis for men to hear
When sickness strikes them, of their future
pains.

PROMETHEUS.

Your first request full easily ye gained,
To learn the story of these cruel chains.
Now hear the grievous woes which yonder
maid

By Hera's will must suffer ; and thou, child
Of Inachus, receive my words, and learn
The limits of thy journey. First, from hence
Turn toward the sunrise, and pursue thy way
O'er lands untill'd, till thou reach the plains
Held of the Scythians, wandering folk, who
dwell

In tented wagon—raised on the well-built
wheel—

A people armed with the far-reaching bow.
These go not near, but guide thy wandering
feet

By the surf-beaten shore, and leave the land.

Next shalt thou come where dwell the
Chalubes,

Who fashion iron : these, too, must thou
beware.

Fierce are they ever, heeding not the right
Of stranger. Next the violent stream, well-
named

Araxes, shalt thou reach, whereof no ford
Is known to man, until thou gain the heights
Of Caucasus, whence from the utmost peak
The torrent bursts. Then southward turn thy
feet,

Leaving those heaven-reaching crags to seek
The race of Amazons, who war with men.

In years hereafter, by Thermodon's stream,
Their home shall be, where the relentless sea
Gulfs the good ship with stern stepmother's
spite.

Escort and welcome shalt thou find of them.

Next shalt thou come where narrow straits
confine

The restless sea : these bravely must thou leave,

Crossing the stream of the Mæotic Gulf.
And ever among men shall record be
Of this thy journey ; since throughout all time
In memory of thee shall it be named.
And now, ye ocean daughters, doth not Zeus
Seem stern to all ? Such wanderings hath he
placed
On this poor mortal maid he fain would wed.

A NORTHERN WINTER (VERG. GEORG. III. 351-380)

" There the herds ever stand in fold : nor gleams
 Grass on the plain, nor foliage on the tree.
 But covered o'er with ice-blocks, fathom-deep,
 Stretches a gloomy snow-encumbered plain,
 Where winter ever reigns, and freezing winds ;
 Nor ever comes the sun to pierce the gloom,
 Or as his steeds mount Heaven's lofty vault,
 Or ocean's ruddy wave his chariot stays.
 All streams are ice, and bear a burden strange
 Of waggons broad, where late the barque did ride.
 Oft vessels burst, and garments stiffen hard
 E'en on the living limb : soft wine is hewn
 With axes, see ! the pools are solid through,
 And beards unkempt are grim with icicles.
 There, covered o'er with rime, huge oxen die
 'Mid the thick falling snow : the deer in drifts
 All huddling stand, their branching horns scarce
 seen.
 Nor hound, nor net, nor feather crimson-stained

Need scare them now : all helpless as they thrust
Th' enclosing snow, as in a slaughter-house,
Amid triumphant shouts men hew them down.
Meanwhile in caverns deep, dug underground,
With careless ease men live, and roll the oak
And full-grown elm to swell the hearth's bright
blaze.

Quick flies the night in sportive game : nor fails
Their rustic mead to crown the mirthful cup."

THE OLD GARDENER OF TARENTUM (VERG. GEORG.
IV. 116).

“ Thus was I driven forth ; and still to-day
Ring in my ears the rabble’s hiss and yell,
That sped me to the gate. So cruel seemed
The force of all their craft and perjury.
Hopeless and homeless then I wandered, till
Lighting on ship with crew compassionate
Across the rough, dissevering sea I sailed
To this Italian land, wherein I dwell.
Here in Tarentum’s streets as porter first
The needful bread I gained, till wandering once,
In careless mood, along th’ enriching flood
Of dark Galæsus, ’neath the city towers,
I marked, where, barren and untilled, there lay
A few, rough acres. There, ’mid rock and shrub,
Sweet-smelling flower and serviceable herb,
The homely cabbage and the lily frail,
In makeshift way I planted : orchards soon,
Th’ apple’s fragrance and the luscious pear,
Each springtide blossomed with a gracious food

For all the kingdom of my thrifty bees,
Obedient subjects to my firm decree,
Who store me tribute in yon osier hives.
And goats I have, now roaming at their will
By yonder cliffs : no cheese Tarentum knows
So rich and ripe as theirs ; yon chestnut too
Hath oft provision for a winter's eve.
So like a king I live ; so too forget
The burden of my exile, as I range
The narrow circuit of this small domain,
Or 'neath yon plane-tree's shade quaff mellow wine."

THE ANCIENT INSURANCE AGENT.

It is an ancient-looking clerk,
And he stoppeth one of three :
“ By thy long gray coat and well-worn hat,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me ? ”

“ The booking-office openeth wide,
The 2.15 is due ;
I must away to London town,
Not linger here with you.”

He holds him by the button-hole,
“ There was a man,” quoth he ;
“ Hands off from my well-fitting coat ! ”
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with pathetic eye :
The traveller stood still ;
And, listening to the ancient clerk,
Resisteth not his will.

The traveller sat on a bench,
 And frowned with visage dark ;
 While thus spake on the ancient man,
 The shiny-coated clerk :

“The church was filled and brightly decked,
 Merrily did they wed ;
 And gaily on to Windermere,
 By Midland Railway sped.”

“ And there, I ween, three summer weeks
 Right happily were spent ;
 As daily scenes divine to view
 Full lovingly they went.”

“Or floating on the silent wave,
 Or clambering o’er the fell ”—
 The traveller here beat his breast,
 For he heard the station bell.

The train hath come : the platform fills :
 The porters bustle by ;
 And passengers in vain to find
 Their loved portmanteaus try.

The traveller here beat his breast,
 And frowned with visage dark,
 While thus spake on the ancient man,
 The shiny-coated clerk :

“ But now the treacherous mist came down,
 Obscured the mountain side,
 While they among the crags to climb
 In reckless folly tried.”

“ For soon amid the driving mist
 Echoed a dismal cry,
 And the gay bridegroom hath sustained
 A fracture of the thigh.”

· · · ·
 · · · ·

“ Ah ! well-a-day ! on bed of pain,
 A helpless man he lay ;
 And over accident so sad
 Oft sighed by night and day.”

“ Twelve weary weeks, twelve weary weeks
 He lay till he was cured ;
 But oh ! the bitterest pang was this—
 That he was—*Uninsured*.”

“Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
 With a woeful agony,
 Constraining me my tale to tell
 For a Mutual Company.”

“Since then at these uncertain hours
 That agony returns ;
 And, till my piteous tale is told,
 This heart within me burns.”

“I pass like night from town to town,
 I have strange power of speech ;
 That moment that his face I see,
 I know the man that must hear me—
 To him my tale I teach.”

“And this I tell, O traveller,
 To thee on journey bent :
 He liveth best, who guardeth best
 ’Gainst every accident.”

“And every man on this broad earth,
 For wife and childrens’ sake

For Accidents, or great or small,
A Policy should take."

. . . .
. . . .

The ancient clerk hath brightened up:
Commission he doth gain.
He goes : and now the traveller
Seeks out another train.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn ;
A wise and well-insured man
He rose the morrow morn.

To those interested in psychological subjects the author would state that the day *after* this was written he was stopped, as he was hurrying to a train across Lyttleton Quay, N.Z., by an agent of a Colonial Insurance Company. However, *he* did not lose his train.

THE NIGHT PORTER.

(λόγοι δ' ἐν ἀλλήλοισιν ἐρρόθουν κάκοι,
 φύλαξ ἐλέγχων φύλακα.—Soph. Antig.)

And is this all that Time hath spared ?
 Hath he not for thy grandeur cared ?
 Thy walls of yore were full of life,
 Of warm debate and civic strife ;
 Here matrons sad their cares rehearsed,
 Or listlessly a dandy cursed.

Here politicians gave their views,
 And gladsome boys retailed the news.
 Now all the living charm is fled,
 And o'er thy walls a gloom hath spread.
 Yet one remaining here I see ;
 Him will I question wonderingly.

“ Good sir, thy visage seems o'ercast
 With memory of misfortune past.
 Dost thou some history recall
 Of this deserted, spacious hall ? ”

He with a curse, not loud but deep,
 Thus answered from his broken sleep :

“Thinks how Bill Bates have overslep’ hisself
outright

A-keepin’ coves like me a-waitin’ here all night.

A precious rumpus they’ll kick up, if that ‘ere
mornin’ train

’Aint washed and scrubbed and swept and swilled
’fore it go on again.

A aggravatin’ chap is Bill, cantankerous, werry
deep;

But howsumever I’ll be off and have my reg’lar
sleep”

JOHN JENKINS.

John Jenkins was a nice young man,
But so extremely shy,
That downward he his eyes would throw
Whene'er in company.

His father once had kept a shop ;
That shop now keeps him in
The neatest, sweetest villa, out
Of London, near Tootin'.

Poor John did everything awry ;
"He eat his mutton cold,"
As Goldsmith says : he got, in fact,
In messes manifold.

Thus whensoe'er his horse he'd mount
In mirth the neighbours stared ;
As he with his reluctant steed
Like Mr. Winkle fared.

His rigid limbs declined to make
The customary bow ;
If "on his legs" to make a speech
He was "off his head," I trow.

But oh! he blundered most whene'er
 "A-wooing he would go."
 For though at 'Arrow he was schooled,
 He hardly was— a *beau*.

He danced so like a bear, he was
 To partners all—a bore;
 His motions like a door were stiff—
 (Can girls adore—a door?)

He marred the *marriage* schemes which oft
 His friends in fondness tried;
 And still at forty-five to woo
 He was not *forti-fied*.

So to conclude—being singular
 He lived a single man;
 And as a bachelor till death
 A "widowed race" he ran.

As an apology see Spenser, *Shepherd's Calendar*. Preface.

"In whom, when, as this, our Poet hath been much travailed and throughly read, how could it be (as that worthy orator said) but that walking in the sun, although for other cause he walks, yet needs he must be sunburnt; and having the sound of those ancient poets still ringing in his ears, he must needs, in singing, hit out some of their tunes."

A DIRGE.

What shocked my aunt, Priscilla Grimm,
So full of phrase antique and prim,
And many a strange, Utopian whim ?

A pun.

What made my uncle, John Bengough,
From expectations cut me off,
With menace fierce and bitter scoff ?

A pun.

What paralysed old Leather-pride,
When for a clerkship I applied
In his concern for selling hide ?

A pun.

What proved my fancied gold was gilt,
What ruined all the hopes I built,—
What made, in fact, Maria jilt ?

A pun.

What brought me here to Colney Hatch,
Until a chance to slip I catch,
And from my keepers “ lift the latch ? ”

A pun.

What makes all friends my presence shun ?
What keeps me here forlorn, undone,
“ Till all my widowed race be run ? ”

A pun.

STUDY ON A SUBURBAN RAILWAY.

The train rocked on o'er crowded street,
Past London dust, by villas neat,
While politicians, loud and long,
Discours'd upon their country's wrong
To all the mixed and motley herd,
Gathered in unpartitioned third,
Or workman rough with horn-hard hand,
Or city clerk politely bland.
For these no thought, no care she knew ;
Nor held them false, nor held them true,
Listless and dull to every sight,
That gives the countryman delight,
And keeps his wond'ring mouth agape,
With new design and novel shape.
One thing there was, one only thing,
Could into life her being bring—

The idol of her lonely thought,
Solace of life with evil fraught,—
Which nestling on her lap of care
She covered with her golden hair,
And ever vexed with vain alarm
Protected with a loving arm—
A brand new bonnet, late displayed
“At Miss Blackallows, North Parade.”

MEDITATION.

Beneath the gray, old, minster walls
 One autumn eve he wandered,
And fanned by soft October breeze
 On prelates bygone pondered.
Of battles grim, and sieges drear
 In days of wild disorder ;
When all the vale was ravaged o'er
 By men across the border.
At last from off a heather bush,
 Which grew there scant and meagre,
He broke a fragrant, flowering twig,
 With hand intent and eager.
As record meant in after times
 Of that still eve autumnal ?
Companion mute of trancèd hours ?
 Oh ! no—to clean a pipe bowl.

MY TAILOR.

I know a tailor deft and good.

His like—oh ! where is he ?
The chiefest he of tailors all,
In this fair land that be.

He basks not in proud fashion's glare ;
Nor name hath he, nor note ;
His place is in a dark, back street,
Sequestered and remote.

Now think not that his raiment hath
More perfect symmetry ;
Nor yet surmise he cutteth cloth
Of finer quality.

Nor tell me that his credit is
Indefinitely long ;
At County Court at times he, too,
Can come it rather strong.

But if thou would'st the secret learn
Of this sartorial bond,
Go, search his books, and 'neath the name
Of this, his client fond,

Thou there shalt see, thus noted down :

“ Peculiarity :

“ Chest well developed, firm and full ”—

A prince of tailors, he !

THE MILLIONAIRE.

The mighty millionaire was sad,
In gloom his brow was bent ;
As swiftly he was borne along
The leafy lanes of Kent.

From every budding hazel bush
Thrush, linnet carolled gay ;
In ecstasy their pulses stirred,
To think next month was May.

His ancient elms majestic stood,
In freshest verdure clad ;
Bright shone the April sun : but still
That millionaire was sad.

Yet quiet was the Stock Exchange,
Nor vexed by rumours mad ;
That very day Directors' fees
In shoals had made him glad.

Old leases, too, just fallen in,
That day he had renewed
At higher rents : oh ! sundry ways
To him had wealth accrued.

And yet in gloom his brow was bent,
All saddened was his mien :
It seemed some ghastly sight of woe,
That moment he had seen.

But cease to wonder. Rather learn
How in the street that day
A shilling he had lost : hence came
His gloom ; hence, too, this lay.

SCUDAMOUR AND PARIDELL.

With that he put his spurres unto his steed

With speare in rest, and toward him did fare,
Like shaft out of a bow preventing speed.

But Scudamour was shortly well aware
Of his approach, and gan himself prepare

Him to receive with entertainment meet.
So furiously they met, that either bare

The other downe under his horses' feete,
That what of them became themselves did scarsly
weete.

As when two billows in the Irish sowndes,

Forcibly driven with contrarie tydes,
Do meet together, each aback reboundes

With roaring rage ; and dashing on all sides
That filleth all the sea with fome, divides

The doubtfull current into divers wayes :
So fell those two in spite of both their prydes ;

But Scudamour himself did soon uprayse,
And, mounting light, his foe for lying long
upbrayes.

Spenser: Faerie Queen, Bk. 4, Cant. 1.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Continuo simul acer equum calcaribus urget,
Ingentemque tenens hastam cito tendit in hostem,
Qualis ubi superat ventos immissa sagitta.
Nec minus interea observans se colligit alter
Dignus ut occurrat digno, pugnaeque parat se.
Praecipites pariterque ruunt, amboque voluti
Subter equos multo deformant pulvere vultus,
Nec se senserunt vitae in discrimine lapsos.
Qualis ubi fluctus diversos æquore in alto
In sese venti rabies agit, ecce ! resultant
Collisi, reboatque fragor : tunc undique pontus
Spumescit, dubiasque undas huc dividit illuc.
Sic cecidere duces virtute armisque superbi:
Protinus en ! saltu surgit Scamaurus, et illum
Talibus incusat dictis tellure jacentem.

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES.

Which I wish to remark,—

And my language is plain,

That for ways that are dark,

And for tricks that are vain,

The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—

Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name,

And I shall not deny

In regard to the same,

What that name might imply ;

But his smile it was pensive and childlike,

As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third;

And quite soft was the skies :

Which it might be inferred

That Ah Sin was likewise ;

Yet he played it that day upon William

And me in a way I despise.

GRÆCULUS ESURIENS.

Græculus esuriens semper caveatur ab omni ;

Utitur ille magis artibus, ille dolo.

Quod satis expediam vobis, ambage remota ;

Nil erit incerti si modo verba valent.

Phurciphero cognomen erat : moresque nefandos

Scire per indicium nominis ipse potes.

Sed tamen e risu docilem mitemque putasses :

Quod Davo solitus dicere sæpe fui.

Sextiles aderant claro sub sub sidere Nonæ ;

Mitescente polo mitior ille fuit.

Which we had a small game,
 And Ah Sin took a hand :
It was euchre. The same
 He did not understand ;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
 With the smile that was childlike and
 bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
 In a way that I grieve.
And my feelings were shocked
 At the state of Nye's sleeve :
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
 And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
 By that heathen Chineese,
And the points that he made,
 Were quite frightful to see.
Till at last he put down a right bower,
 Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Illa nocte tamen deludebamur ab illo,
Dedecus O ! falli nos ita posse dolo.
Nam placuit nobis par impar ludere talis :
Ecce ! comes—ludi nescius—ille fuit.
Et more infantis pueri ridebat inepte,
Quo risu falsum dissimularet opus.
Ah ! noctem infandam ! Quali nos arte fefellit !
Veste sub infida quot latuere doli ?
Nam me per talos venerem quærente secundos
Semper damnosi subsiluire canes.

Then I looked up at Nye,
 And he gazed upon me ;
 And he rose with a sigh,
 And said, " Can this be ?
 We are ruined by Chinese cheap labour ;"
 And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
 I did not take a hand ;
 But the floor it was strewed
 Like the leaves on the strand.
 With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
 In the game " he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
 He had twenty-four packs,—
 Which was coming it strong,
 Yet I state but the facts ;
 And we found on his nails, which were taper,
 What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

At Græco semper fortuna favebat iniqua ;
 Quum jaceret talos excidit ecce ! Venus.
 Et nos delusit talis fallacibus ultro,
 Dum tandem a Davo fraus adaperta fuit.
 Tum Davus : “ Victi a Græcis fractique perimus,
 Græculus a Davo mox superatus erat.
 Qua pugna nil ipse egi : mox cernere miror
 Arma vafri Græci multa jacere solo.
 Littore quam multæ vento turbantur arenæ,
 Vestibus, ungue, coma tot latuere doli.

Which is why I remark,
 And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark,
 And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chineese is peculiar,—
 Which the same I am free to maintain.

Bret Harte.

Quare vir Græcus semper caveatur ab omni,

Utitur ille magis artibus, ille dolo.

Quod satis expedit vobis ambage remota :

Semper et expediam tempus in omne viris.

ANACREONTIC.

Ὅδῳ νεανίας τις,
 δόμου τινὸς πάροιθεν,
 στείχων αἰὲ παρήει,
 οὐδ' ἡμέρας φθινοῦσης
 εἰς οἶκον ἦν ἄφαιτος·
 ἐγὼ δ' ἴδων τοιαῦτα
 ἐθαύμασ' ἡμέρας ἔξ,
 ἔσθ' ἐβδόμη κατέιδον
 ἐκ δωμάτων προβαίνειν,
 ἢ παρθένων ἀπάσων
 μέγιστον εἶχε κύλλος·
 κᾶπειτ' ἐθαύμασ' οὐδέν.

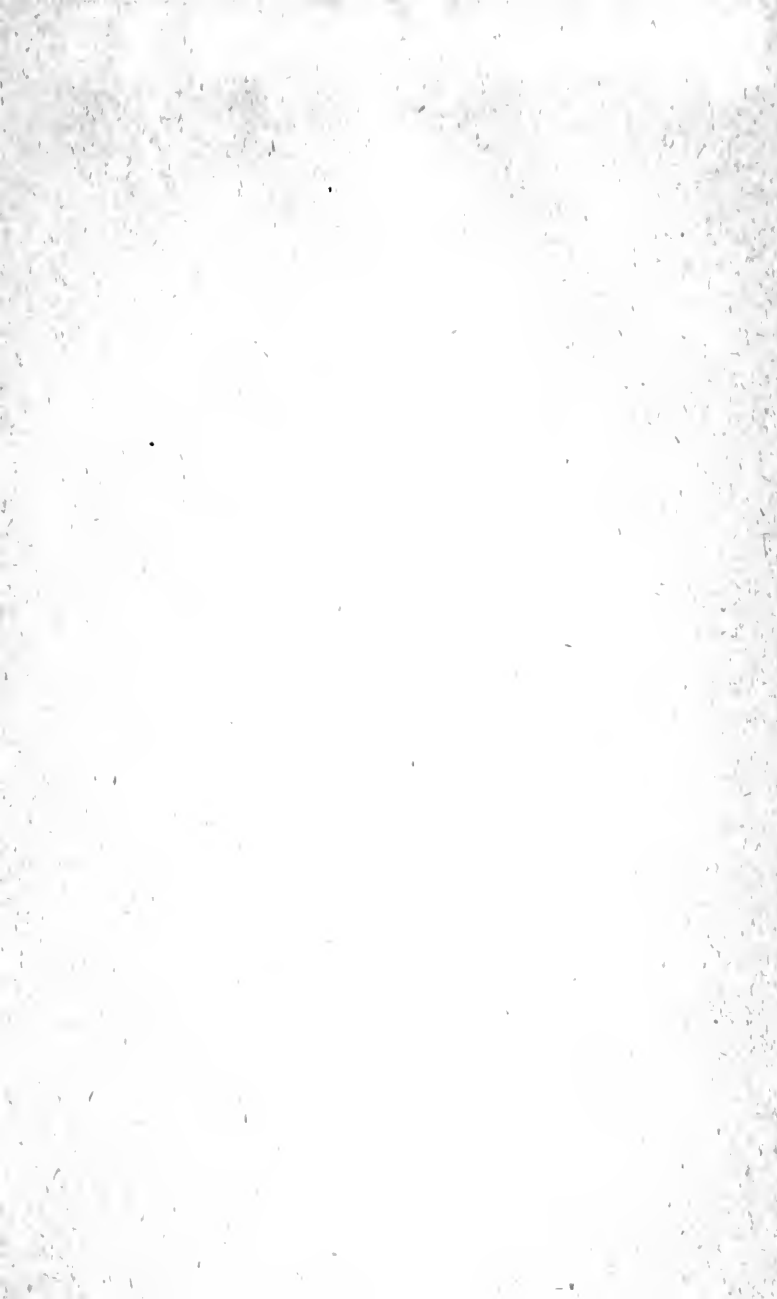
NOTE ON HOR. OD. I. 27. I.

“Natis in usum lætitiæ scyphis
Pugnare Thracum est.”

The words “in usum lætitiæ” are generally taken to mean “for pleasure’s sake;” but this is too vague for Horace, who delights in special meanings. “Lætitiæ” should be spelt with a capital letter, and is a proper name for a girl—Lætitia—as with us. Horace is alluding to the custom of giving children cups, &c., with their names inscribed on them, just as we have cups with such inscriptions as “For John,” “For a good boy,” “A present from Brighton.” So “*inscripta lintea*” of Juv. Sat 8-168—a well-known crux to commentators—refers to table napkins with

“Let good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both,”

or some similar motto printed on them. To translate thus is to follow the old rule, “*Præstat difficilior lectio*,”—“the more difficult interpretation is the best.”



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